

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A negative electrode material for non-aqueous electrolyte secondary batteries, wherein comprising:

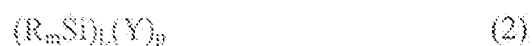
a negative electrode active material containing a lithium ion-occluding and releasing material selected from the group consisting of silicon particles having an average particle size of about 0.01 to 50 μm , silicon oxide particles represented by the general formula SiO_x , wherein $1.0 < x < 1.6$ and having an average particle size of about 0.01 to 50 μm , composite dispersion particles having an average particle size of about 0.01 to 50 μm where metallic silicon crystallites having an average particle size of about 1 to 500 nm are dispersed in a crystalline or amorphous silicon dioxide, and mixtures thereof, which has been treated with an organosilicon base surface treating agent, ~~is surface-coated~~ and surface-coated with a conductive coating.

2. (Cancelled)

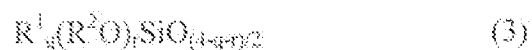
3. (Original) The negative electrode material of claim 1 wherein said organosilicon base surface treating agent is at least one member selected from the group consisting of a silane coupling agent or a (partial) hydrolytic condensate thereof, a silylating agent, and a silicone resin.

4. (Currently Amended) The Δ negative electrode material ~~of claim 3~~ wherein said for non-aqueous electrolyte secondary batteries, comprising:

a negative electrode active material containing a lithium ion-occluding and releasing material which has been treated with an organosilicon base surface treating agent is at least one member selected from the group consisting of a silane coupling agent of the general formula (1) or a (partial) hydrolytic condensate thereof, a silylating agent of the general formula (2), and a silicone resin of the general formula (3),



wherein R is a monovalent organic group, Y is a hydrolyzable group or hydroxyl group, n is an integer of 1 to 4, p is an integer of 1 to 3, L is an integer of 2 to 4, and m is an integer of 1 to 3,



wherein R¹ is hydrogen or a substituted or unsubstituted monovalent hydrocarbon group of 1 to 10 carbon atoms, R² is hydrogen or a substituted or unsubstituted monovalent hydrocarbon group of 1 to 6 carbon atoms, q and r each are 0 or a positive number satisfying 0 ≤ q ≤ 2.5, 0.01 ≤ r ≤ 3, and 0.5 ≤ q+r ≤ 3 and surface-coated with a conductive coating.

5. (Original) The negative electrode material of claim 1 wherein said conductive coating is a carbon coating.

6. (Original) The negative electrode material of claim 5 wherein the amount of carbon coated is 5 to 70% by weight of said negative electrode active material.

7. (Withdrawn) A method of preparing a negative electrode material for non-aqueous electrolyte secondary batteries, comprising the step of heat treating a negative electrode active material containing a lithium ion-occluding and releasing material which has been treated with an organosilicon base surface treating agent, in an atmosphere containing an organic material gas or vapor at a temperature in the range of 500 to 1400°C.

8. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 7 wherein the organic material gas or vapor is thermally decomposed to form graphite in a non-oxidizing atmosphere at a temperature in the range of 500 to 1400°C.

9. (Currently Amended) A lithium ion secondary battery comprising the negative electrode material of claim 1 or 4 as a negative electrode active material.

10. (Previously Presented) The negative electrode material of claim 1, wherein said lithium ion-occluding and releasing material is a metallic silicon powder having an average particle size of 3.5 μm and a BET specific surface area of 4 m^2/g or a silicon oxide powder $\text{SiO}_{1.02}$ having an average particle size of 1.1 μm and a BET specific surface area of 10.3 m^2/g , and said surface treating agent is vinyltrimethoxysilane, γ -methacryloxypropyl-trimethoxysilane, or hexamethyldisilazane.